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HOUSES WITH SECRET CHAMBERS.

THOUGH we have on former occasions referred to houses with lurking-places, or secret chambers, the subject seems to be of such interest as to warrant our giving some further examples.

Plowden Hall, county of Salop, with 'its gable ends, high chimneys, its floors, staircases, and doors of solid oak, and walls covered with oak panelling,' is described as being full of nooks and corners. There is a hiding-hole in the closet of one of the bedrooms, where the boards of the flooring are so arranged as to be easily moved; and underneath is a trap-door, by which a small ladder leads down into a dark hole where there is just room enough for a man to change his position with ease from a standing to a sitting posture. There is a shelf, on which the concealed person could eat his food. Tradition states that a priest was actually concealed there for a fortnight whilst Cromwell's soldiers were posted outside the gates; and that these were obliged to leave without having discovered him. Besides this hiding-place, there is an escape about the width and form of a chimney, reaching from one of the bedrooms down to the ground-floor of the house, to which a man might be lowered by means of a rope. There is also an outlet over the chapel through two trap-doors on to the roof, where a person might escape between the eaves of the house; and a portion of the flooring of the chapel is so formed as to lift up and cover a hiding-place below for concealing the sacred vessels.

Raglan Castle, Hallam, Derbyshire; Maple-Durham House, Oxon; Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk; Coughton Hall, Warwickshire; Harrowden, the seat of the Lords Vaux; and the old Manor-house, Long Clawson, each has its lurking-places and secret chamber. That in the last named quaint, old, picturesque-looking house is reached by the chimney of one of the sitting-rooms.

'White Welles House, which lies on the borders of Enfield Chase, is said to have been' full of holes, dark mysterious vaults, and subterranean passages.

Recusants and priests found refuge in Little Malvern Court in the days of their persecution, the position of one or two hiding-places in the roof being still pointed out.

A secret chamber in Lowstock Hall, in the parish of Bolton, Lancashire, which was pulled down in 1816, was associated with blood-stains on the hearthstone of one of the rooms, and the supposed murder of a priest in the troublous times.

In connection with Yorkshire, the old Red House is made mention of as having had a secret chamber and gallery underneath the roof. These were brought to light some years ago when workmen were employed in making repairs and alterations on the mansion. The noted royalist, Sir Henry Slingsby, lay for a time concealed in the hiding-place thus skilfully contrived; but venturing forth one moonlight night to enjoy the freedom of a walk in his garden, he was seen by a servant-man, who betrayed him to his enemies; and soon after the gallant old colonel was seized, conveyed to London, and beheaded on Tower Hill.

Kingerby Old Hall, situated in the same county, was also possessed of one or more secret chambers.

Ashbourne Place, in Sussex, which was said to have been built by a brother of Bishop Juxon, was often made use of as a place of refuge by that persecuted prelate after the death of Charles I. At the time when his royal master was beheaded, Juxon was Bishop of London and Clerk of the Closet; and being implicitly trusted by his royal master, to whom he was devotedly attached, he received his last confidences on the scaffold, and his George, with the oft-referred-to word, 'Remember!' The father of the present proprietor of Ashbourne, in opening a communication between the back and front chambers, discovered a room, the existence of which was previously unknown, and to which access could only have been gained through the chimney. In all probability, this curious retreat was Bishop Juxon's hiding-place.

There is a gallery situated in the attic story of the mansion at Stanford Court, in Worcestershire, in which Arthur Salwin—an ancestor of the present proprietor of the estate, who lived in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I.—and his four sons and seven daughters, together with others of their kindred, are portrayed on the oak-panelled walls of the room in the costume of the day; the ladies in embroidered dresses, with jewelled ornaments. Underneath each figure is a motto in Latin. Behind the panels are secret passages, which, previous to the alterations of modern times, extended over a great part of the mansion.

Sanston Hall, the seat of the ancient family of Huddleston, in Cambridgeshire, was destroyed on account of the owner's adherence to the ancient faith, and rebuilt in the time of Queen Mary, when the precaution was taken to erect a chapel in the roof. It is approached by a winding staircase, which also gives access to a secret chamber. In the hiding-place near the chapel in the roof at the top of the old winding staircase, there were found some oyster-shells; and a fowl's bone was picked up in the one belonging to Lydiate Hall—relics of some poor prisoner's solitary meal.

Upton Court, near Reading, the former residence of the Perkins family, has also its hidden retreat, which is difficult of access, being approached by a trap-door in the midst of a chimney-stack near the lesser Hall.

About the beginning of the present, or the end of last century, a secret chamber was accidentally discovered in the ancient mansion of Bourton-on-the-Water, a 'large rambling house of many gables,' situated in Gloucestershire. The door appeared on tearing off the paper which was about to be removed. It was on the second (or upper) floor landing-place, and opened into a small chamber about eight feet square, containing a chair and a table. On the back of the former lay a black robe; and the whole had the appearance as if some one had recently risen from his seat and left the room. On the same floor there were several other apartments, of which three only were in use, the other (called the Dark Room) having been locked up for many years. Of the three in use, one was styled the Chapel, and another the Priest's Room. The former had a vaulted roof or ceiling. All three were supposed by the villagers to be haunted, and they had been known by the above appellations in the family long anterior to the discovery of the door. This interesting old mansion was sold in 1608 to Sir Thomas Edwards, treasurer of the royal household, and subsequently privy-councillor to Charles I., and it was probably during his occupancy that Charles is said to have passed the first night there on his way from Oxford. Since 1834, this house—except a small part of the south front—was pulled down, the fine old trees in which it was embosomed felled, the shrubberies made away with, the pleasure-

grounds converted into pasture, and the remains of the house into a dispensary!

The hiding-place in Heale House, near Amesbury, in Wilts, for several days formed a retreat for King Charles II. after the battle of Worcester.

In the course of this century, a movable panel was discovered in a small panelled room in the old manor-house of Chelvey, county of Somerset. This aperture, for some unexplained reason, was closed up hastily, and the spring by which it was opened was said to be lost. In an adjoining room, which was much larger, and panelled in a similar manner, there was a cupboard, the floor of which—afterwards nailed down—had been formerly movable. Underneath was a short flight of steps, which again ascended, and led to a pretty long but very narrow room at the back of the fireplace. This concealed chamber was furnished with an iron scone projecting from the wall, to hold a candle, and was also provided with a small fireplace.

Parham, which belongs to the Curzon family, has a secret chamber close to the chapel in the roof of the house, and the way down to it is through a bench standing out from the wall.

Captain Duthy, in his *History of Hampshire*, says 'that the old house at Hinton-Ampner, in that county, was subjected to the evil report of being haunted; that strange and unaccountable circumstances did occur there, by which the peace and comfort of a most respectable and otherwise strong-minded lady, at that time occupier of the mansion, were essentially interfered with by noises and interruptions that to her appeared awful and unearthly, and which finally led to her giving up the house. Afterwards, on its being taken down, it was discovered that in the thickness of the walls were secret passages and stairs not generally known to exist, which afforded peculiar facilities for any one carrying on without detection the mysteries of a haunted house.'

The following extract, taken from a state paper in the public Record Office, is preserved among others relating to the Rebellion of 1745, and obviously has reference to the search that was being made all over the country for suspected persons. Worksop Manor as it then stood is said to have been burned down in 1761. Examination of Elizabeth Brown, taken upon oath before Richard Bagshaw, the 24th November 1745—'Who says that nine years ago last spring, upon that Easter Monday, she, Catherine Marshall, and another young woman, went to Worksop Manor to see Elizabeth Walkden, who lived as a servant with the Duke of Norfolk there; and desiring to look at the house, she said Elizabeth Walkden, she believed, showed them most of the rooms of the house; and at last coming upon the leads of the house, and walking and looking about them, she said Elizabeth Walkden said she would let them see a greater variety than they had yet seen; after which she raised up the ledge of a sheet of lead with her knife till she got her fingers under it, and then she

desired them to assist her, which they did; and then under that she took up a trap-door where there was a flight of stairs, which they went down, into a little room which was all dark; that the said Elizabeth Walkden opening the window-shutter, there was a fireplace, a bed, and a few chairs in the said room; and asking her what use that room was for, she said it was to hide people in trouble—sometimes. Then the said Elizabeth Walkden went to the side of the room next to the stair-foot, and opened a door in the wainscot about the middle of the height of the room, which they looked into, but it being dark, they could not see anything in it; but the said Elizabeth Walkden said they could not go into it, as it was full of arms; upon which the said Elizabeth Walkden shut the door, and they went up-stairs; and then she shut the trap-door, and laid down the sheet of lead as it was before, which was so nice she could not discern it from another part of the leads, and believes she could not find it if she were there again.

In a very old house entered from the High Street of Canterbury, and nearly facing Mersey Lane, which leads straight to the cathedral, one of the rooms had a window opening into an adjoining church. In the thickness of the walls there were two or three secret stairs. It was said to have been a nunnery formerly; and that a subterranean passage, it was ascertained, used to unite it with the cathedral.

Woodcote, Hampshire; Coldham House, Suffolk; Watcomb and Maple-Durham, Berkshire; Stonyhurst in Lancashire; Treago, Herefordshire; Harborough Hall, situated midway between Hagley and Kidderminster, all had their secret chambers; and the ancient seat of the Tichbornes was similarly provided, together with a complication of secret passages and stairs.

Compton Wynnyates, a remote and picturesque mansion belonging to the Marquis of Northampton, has an upper chapel in the topmost gable, with ancient wooden altar, three staircases leading to the Priest's room in the lower story, secret passages, and hiding-places behind the wainscoting spacious enough to hold one hundred persons in case of alarm. The existence of such a chapel sufficiently indicates that the rites of the old religion were practised in private, although the Protestant place of worship remained open below.

In Essex, the Wisemans of Braddox or Broad-oaks were of the number of those who suffered during the reigns of Elizabeth and James for their noted 'harbouring of priests.' In *P. R. O. Dom. Elizabeth*, vol. 244, n. 7, may be seen two forms of indictment of Richard Jackson, priest, for saying mass at Braddox, and of various members of the Wiseman family for being present at mass on the 25th August and the 8th of September 1592. Again: 'Mr Worseley and Mr Newall have been to Widow Wiseman's house in Essex, and found a mass preparing; but the priest escaped.' There were two hiding-places in Braddox: the most important of these adjoined the chapel, and was constructed in a thick wall of the chimney, behind a finely laid and carved mantel-piece.

In connection with the old mansion of the Carylls at West Grinstead, the Abbé Denis tells us that it also has two hiding-places. 'One of these is between the mantel-piece and ceiling of

the dining-room; and the way to get to it is to go up the flue of the chimney as high as the ceiling of the room on the second floor; and then, by an aperture in the side of the chimney or flue, to drop down into the hiding-hole. Another opening also exists in the chimney of the room above. The second place of concealment is quite underneath the roof of the house. It had likewise two ways of access—the one from an attic, the other from a closet or small room underneath.' In Benton, the original seat of the Carylls in Sussex, there is one on the ground-floor between two kitchen chimneys, which is entered by an opening in the room at the back. At New Building, a house more recently erected by the Carylls, there are also two secret rooms; one on the second floor, formed in the thickness of the wall between two chimneys, but entered by a concealed door in one of the two adjoining rooms. The other is in the opposite gable, and is entered from the room on the ground-floor below, through the top of a cupboard which stands in the wall close to the chimney.

The walls of the 'ancient moated and turreted mansion' of Lyford, Berks, were 'pierced with concealed galleries and hiding-places;' one of the latter was excavated in the wall above the gateway.

Several 'hiding-holes' have also come to light in the fine old house of Sutton Place, near Guildford, Surrey; and some years ago, a 'most beautifully embossed leather casket, iron-bound, containing relics of some of the martyred priests,' was found in one of these places of concealment behind the wainscot panelling of the chapel. A curious printed volume entitled *A Sure Haven against Shipwreck* was found concealed 'between the floor and the ceiling.' It would seem that Brother Nicholas Owen, alias Little John, S.J., 'that useful cunning joiner of those times,' was the constructor of many of these secret rooms, to be found in the greater portion of our 'stately homes of England,' for we read in *Records of the English Provinces* that 'he was divers times hung upon a Topcliff rack in the Tower of London, to compel him to betray the hiding-places he had made up and down the land.' This said 'skilful architect' was afterwards seized, according to the same authority, in company with Fathers Garnet and Oldcorne, in one of the numerous hiding-places in Hendlip House, near Worcester, already referred to in No. 1040 of this *Journal*. The secret chamber in which these Jesuit Fathers were concealed is thus described in Lingard's *England*: 'The opening was from an upper room through the fireplace. The wooden border of the hearth was made to take up and put down like a trap-door, and the bricks were taken out and replaced in their courses whenever it was used.' The former Westons of Sutton Place were well known to government as shelterers of priests. It was searched on the 5th of November 1578, by order of the Privy-council, for 'popish priests;' and again on the 14th of January 1591, for one Morgan, a 'massing priest,' supposed to be 'lurking there in secret sort.'

The far-famed 'Burleigh Park by Stamford Town' is also in possession of a secret chamber. This concealed apartment, of whose existence the

family were altogether unaware, was brought to light in the course of this century through the instrumentality of the law agent, and was found to contain furniture of an old-fashioned description, together with several framed engravings. These latter, when agitated by the wind, which found its way in through a broken window-pane, struck against the wall, thereby producing a flapping noise, which had long procured for the adjoining sleeping apartment the designation of 'the Haunted Room.'

The grand old historic mansion of Knebworth, Herts, like others of similar age and importance, possessed trap-doors, hiding-places, &c.; and underneath a room adjoining the so-styled 'Haunted Chamber,' and belonging to one of the square towers of the gateway, there was a mysterious room or *oubliette*, of which the late Lord Lytton thus speaks: 'How could I help writing romances, when I had walked, trembling at my own footsteps, through that long gallery with its ghostly portraits, mused in these tapestry chambers, and passed with bristling hair into the shadowy abysses' of the secret chamber. This portion of Knebworth was pulled down in 1812.

Referring to houses north of the Border having secret chambers, Sir Walter Scott says: 'There were few Scottish houses belonging to families of rank which had not such contrivances, the political incidents of the times often calling them into occupation.' 'The concealed apartment opening by a sliding panel into the parlour,' in the old mansion-house of Swinton, is made good use of by Sir Walter in his beautiful novel of *Peveril of the Peak*.

Some ten or twelve years ago, while workmen were employed in making alterations at the house of Nunraw, near the village of Garvald, Haddingtonshire, they came upon a secret chamber in the depth of one of the walls, which on inspection was found to contain some mummies, pictures, and other property. In olden times, Nunraw was a nunnery belonging to the priory of Haddington, and though modernised, still exhibits evident marks of great antiquity.

There is an apartment now used as a bedroom in Sir George Warrender's house at Brunsfield, near Edinburgh, which, however, can hardly be called a secret chamber, inasmuch as it possesses windows and two external walls, but having the interior walls on both sides of the entrance of great thickness. The history of this room is somewhat obscure. It is said to have been used as a place of concealment for certain Jacobites after the rebellion of 1745; and blood-stains, which are still distinctly visible on the floor, point remotely to this theory. Another story is that a cadet of the house of Warrender returned from Carlisle about 1760, and shortly afterwards died in this room, which was immediately bricked up, so that all evidences of the event might be removed. In any case, the room had remained sealed up beyond the recollection of any one familiar with the house, and the ivy with which the walls were at this time covered, had almost entirely obliterated any external traces. It was rediscovered about sixty years ago by Lee, the English landscape painter, who, when sketching the house, found himself putting in windows of which he could not remember the rooms. When opened, the room presented the appearance of

having been left hurriedly, by a departing guest, everything being in disorder, even to the ashes left undisturbed in the grate. Brunsfield House dates from 1605.

BY ORDER OF THE LEAGUE.

CHAPTER V.

THE weeping woman looked up, and beheld the loveliest face she had ever seen. The girl standing before her possessed all the attributes of southern beauty. Her hair, which was long and luxuriant, hung in one thick plait down her back, and lay in careless waves upon a forehead pure as chiselled marble; her face was full, with deep red flushed under the transparent skin; her features exquisitely moulded; whilst her eyes, deep as running water, conveyed an air of pride and power—a sense of passion equally capable of looking implacable hate or fondest love. They were commanding now, as the woman looked up in the stranger's face.

'Who are you?' she asked wonderingly.

'Men call me Isodore,' the stranger replied in a voice singularly sweet. 'I have no other name. Will you let me look at the coin you have in your hand?'

Never dreaming of refusing this request, the woman handed over the gold piece to the girl, who looked at it long and intently. Her eyes were hard and stern when she spoke again. 'Where did you get this?' she asked.

'It was given me to stake at the table. I noticed that it bore some device, and I exchanged it for a coin of my own.'

'It has no meaning to you! It is not possible you are one of us?'

'I do not understand you,' the woman replied. 'It is a curious coin. I have seen one once before—that is all I know of it.'

'Listen!' the girl said in a hushed voice. 'You do not comprehend what its possession means to you. It is the symbol, the sign of membership of the strongest political Brotherhood in Europe. If it was known to be in your possession, your life would pay the forfeit; it would be regained at all hazards. If one of the Brotherhood knew another had deliberately parted with it, I would not give a hair for his life.'

'And he is in danger of his life!' the woman cried, starting to her feet. 'Give it me, that I may return it to him.'

'No!' was the stern reply; 'he does not get off so easily. We do not temper the wind thus to traitors.—Woman! what is Hector le Gautier to you, that you should do this favour for him?'

'He is a man, and his life is in danger. It is my duty'—

'Mark me!' Isodore replied with stern emphasis. 'I have not the eyes of a hawk and the hearing of a hare for nothing. I was opposite you in the saloon, and I know that something more than womanly sympathy prompts you. I saw the struggle in Le Gautier's face; I saw you start and tremble as he spoke to you; I saw you change the coin for one of yours, and I saw you weeping over it just now. Woman! I ask again what is he to you?'

Slowly the words came from the other's lips,

as if forced from them by some mesmeric influence. 'You are right,' she said; 'for—heaven help me—he is my husband! I am Valerie le Gautier.—Now, tell me who you are.'

'Tell me something more. How long has he been your husband?'

'Nine years—nine long, weary years of coldness and neglect, hard words, and, to my shame, hard blows. But he tired of me, as he tires of all his toys: he always tires when the novelty wears off.'

'Yes,' Isodore said softly, 'as he tired of me.'

'You!' exclaimed Valerie le Gautier, starting—'you! What! and have you, too, fallen a victim to his treachery? If you have known him, been a victim to his perfidy, then, from the bottom of my heart, I pity you.'

'And I need pity.'

For a short space neither spoke, as they sat listening to the murmur of the leaves in the trees, broken every now and then by the sounds of play or laughter within the glittering saloon. Isodore's face, sad and downcast for a moment, gradually resumed its hard, proud look, and when she spoke again, she was herself.

'We have a sympathy in common,' she said. 'We have a debt to pay, and, by your help, I will pay it. Justice, retribution is slow, but it is certain. Tell me, Valerie—if I may call you by your name—how long is it since you saw your husband till to-night?'

'Seven years—seven years since he deserted me cruelly and heartlessly, leaving me penniless in the streets of Rome. I had to live how I could; I even begged sometimes, for he has squandered the little money I brought to him.'

'Do you think he knew you to-night?' Isodore asked.

'Knew me?' was the bitter response. 'No, indeed. Had he known I was so near, he would have fled from my presence.'

'He laughs at us, no doubt, as poor defenceless women. But time will show. I can ever find an hour in the midst of my great work to watch his movements. I have waited long; but the day is coming now.—Would you know the latest ambition of your honourable husband? He intends to get married again. He has dared to lift his eyes to Enid Charteris.'

'Hector dares to marry again!' Valerie exclaimed, 'and I alive? Oh, I must take vengeance, indeed, for this.'

She drew a long breath, shutting her lips tightly. The passion of jealousy, long crushed down, rose with overwhelming force; she was no longer a weak defenceless woman, but a fury, maddened and goaded to the last extremity.

Isodore watched her, well pleased with this display of spirit. 'Now you speak,' she said admiringly, 'and I respect you. All your womanhood is on fire within you to avenge the wrongs of years, and it shall be no fault of mine if they slumber again. Yes, your perfect husband designs to wed again.'

'I believe you are a witch. You have roused my curiosity; you must tell me more than this.'

'Hector le Gautier is in love,' Isodore replied, a world of quiet scorn running through her

words, 'and, strange as it may seem, I believe true. An English girl—Enid Charteris, with the blue eyes and fair hair—has bewitched him, satiated as he is with southern beauty.—You look surprised! I have the gift of fern-seed, and walk invisible. All these things I know. The Order is to be betrayed when the pear is ripe, and the traitor will be Hector le Gautier. The price of his treachery will enable him to become respectable, and lead a quiet life henceforward with his loving fair-haired bride. Poor, feeble, calculating fool!' The bitter scorn in these words was undecipherable, and round the speaker's lips a smile was wreathed—a smile of placid unrelenting hate and triumph strangely blended.

'It shall never be,' Valerie cried passionately, 'while I can raise my voice to save an innocent girl from the toils of such a scoundrel!—Yes,' she hissed out between her white clenched teeth, 'it will be a fitting revenge. It would be bliss indeed to me if I could stand between them at the altar, and say that man is mine!'

'He is ours,' Isodore corrected sternly; 'do not ignore that debt entirely. Be content to leave the plot to me. I have worked out my scheme, and we shall not fail. Five years ago, I was a child, happy on the banks of my beloved Tiber. It was not far from Rome that we lived, my old nurse and I, always happy till he came and stole away my heart with his grand promises and sweet words. Six short months sufficed him, for I was only a child then, and he threw away his broken plaything. It made a woman of me, and it cost me a lover worth a world of men like him. I told him I would have revenge. He laughed then; but the time is coming surely. I have a powerful interest in the Brotherhood; he knows me by name, but otherwise we are strangers. To-night, I saw my old lover in his company. Ah, had he but known!—Come, Valerie; give me that coin, the lucky piece of gold which shall lure him to destruction. Come with me; I must say more to you.'

Mechanically, Valerie le Gautier followed her companion out of the Kursaal gardens, through the streets, walking till they got a little way out of the town. At a house there, a little back from the road, Isodore stopped, and opened the door with a passkey. Inside, all was darkness; but taking her friend by the hand, and bidding her not to fear, Isodore led her forward along a flagged passage and up a short flight of steps. Opening another door, and turning up the hanging lamp, she smiled. 'Sit down,' she said, 'my sister that is to be. You are welcome.'

The apartment was somewhat large and lofty. By the light from the silver lamp, suspended from the ceiling in an eagle's beak, the stranger noticed the room with its satin-wood panels running half way up the walls, surmounted by crimson silk hangings, divided over the three long windows by gold cords; a thread of the same material running through the rich upholstery with which the place was garnished. The floor was paved with bright coloured woodwork of some mysterious design; and heavy rugs, thick and soft to the feet, scattered about sufficient for comfort, but not enough to mar the beauty of the inlaid floor. Pictures on china plates let into the hangings

were upon the walls; and in the windows were miniature ferneries, a little fountain plashing in the midst of each. There was no table in the room, nothing whereon to deposit anything, save three brass stands, high and narrow; one a little larger than the rest, upon which stood a silver spirit-lamp under a quaint-looking urn, a chocolate pot to match, and three china cups. There were cosy-looking chairs of dark massive oak, upholstered in red silk, with the same gold thread interwoven in all. A marble clock, with a figure of Liberty thereon, stood on the mantel-piece.

Isodore threw herself down in a chair. The other woman took in the scene with speechless rapture; there was something soothing in the harmonious place. 'You are pleased,' Isodore said with a little smile of pleasure, as she surveyed the place. 'This is my home, if I can call any place a home for such a wanderer; but when I can steal a few days from the cares of the cause, I come here. I need not ask you if you like my apartments?'

'Indeed, I do,' Valerie replied, drawing a long breath of delight. 'It is absolutely perfect. The whole thing surprises and bewilders me. I should not have thought there had been such a place in Homburg.'

'I will give you another surprise,' Isodore laughed, 'before the evening is over. I am the princess of surprises; I surprise even the followers who owe me loyal submission.'

'Ah! had I such a paradise as this, I should forswear political intrigue. I should leave that to those who had more to gain or to lose by such hazards. I should be content to let the world go on, so that I had my little paradise.'

'So I feel at times,' Isodore observed with a little sigh. 'But I am too deeply pledged to draw my hand back now. Without me, the Order is like an army deprived of its general; besides, I am the creature of circumstance; I am the sworn disciple of those whose mission it is to free the down-trodden from oppression and to labour in freedom's name.' As she said these words, the sad look upon her brow cleared away like mist before the sun, and a proud light glistened in the wondrous eyes. Half ashamed of her enthusiasm, she turned to the stand by her side, and soon two cups of chocolate were frothed out of the pot, filling the room with its fragrance. Crossing the floor, she handed one of the cups to her new-found friend. For a moment they sat silent, then Isodore turned to her companion smilingly.

'How would you like to go with me to London?' she asked.

'I would follow you to the world's end!' was the fervid reply; 'but there are many difficulties in the way. I have my own living to get, precarious as it is, and I dare not leave this place.'

'I permit no difficulties to stand in my way,' Isodore said proudly; 'to say a thing, with me, is to do it. Let me be candid with you, Valerie. Providence has thrown you in my path, and you will be useful to me; in addition, I have taken a fancy to you. Yes,' she continued fervently, 'the time has come—the pear is ripe. You shall come with me to London; you have a wrong as well as I, and you shall see the height

of Isodore's vengeance.' Saying these words in a voice quivering with passionate intensity, she struck three times on the bell at her side. Immediately, in answer to this, the heavy curtains over the door parted, and a girl entered.

She was Isodore's living image; the same style and passionate type of face; but she lacked the other's firm determined mouth and haughtiness of features. She was what the lily is to the passion-flower. Her eyes were bent upon her sister—for she was Lucrece—with the same love and patient devotion one sees in the face of a dog.

'You rang, Isodore?' she asked; and again the stranger noticed the great likeness in the voice, save as to the depth and ring of Isodore's tones.

'Yes, Lucrece, I rang,' the sister replied. 'I have brought a visitor to see you.—Lucrece, this lady is Hector le Gautier's wife.'

'Le Gautier's wife!' the girl asked with startled face. 'Then what brings her here? I should not have expected'—

'You interrupt me, child, in the midst of my explanations. I should have said Le Gautier's deserted wife.'

'Ah!' Lucrece exclaimed, 'I understand.—Isodore, if you collect under your roof all the women he has wronged and deceived, you will have a large circle. What is she worth to us?'

'Child!' Isodore returned with some marked emphasis on her words, 'she is my friend—the friend of Isodore should need no welcome here.'

A deep blush spread over the features of Lucrece at these words, as she walked across the room to Valerie's side. Her smile was one of consolation and welcome as she stooped and kissed the other woman lightly. 'Welcome!' she said. 'We see both friends and foes here, and it is hard sometimes to tell the grain from the chaff. You are henceforward the friend of Lucrece too.'

'Your kindness almost hurts me,' Valerie replied in some agitation. 'I have so few friends, that a word of sympathy is strange to me. Whatever you may want or desire, either of you, command me, and Valerie le Gautier will not say you nay.'

'Lucrece, listen to me,' said Isodore in a voice of stern command. 'To-morrow, we cross to London, and the time has come when you must be prepared to assist in the cause.—See what I have here!' Without another word, she placed the gold moldire in her sister's hand.

Lucrece regarded it with a puzzled air. To her simple mind, it merely represented the badge of the Brotherhood.

'You do not understand,' Isodore continued, noticing the look of bewilderment. 'That coin, as you know, is the token of the Order, and to part with it knowingly is serious'—

'Yes,' Lucrece interrupted; 'the penalty is death.'

'You are right, my sister. That is Le Gautier's token. He staked it yonder at the Kursaal, giving it to his own wife, though he did not know it, to put upon the colour. The coin is in my hands, as you see. Strange, how man becomes fortune's fool!'

'Then your revenge will be complete,' Lucrece

suggested simply. 'You have only to hand it over to the Council of Three, or even the Crimson Nine, and in one hour'—

'A dagger's thrust will rid the world of a scoundrel.—Pah! you do not seem to understand such feeling as mine. No, no; I have another punishment for him. He shall live; he shall carry on his mad passion for the fair-haired Enid till the last; and when his cup of joy shall seem full, I will dash it from his lips.'

'Your hate is horrible,' Valerie exclaimed with an involuntary shudder. 'I should not like to cross your path.'

'My friends find me true,' Isodore answered sadly; 'it is only my enemies that feel the weight of my arm.—But enough of this; we need stout hearts and ready brains, for we have much work before us.'

Three days later, and the women drove through the roar and turmoil of London streets. They were bent upon duty and revenge. One man in that vast city of four or five million souls was their quarry.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr Varley, Sir Geoffrey Charteris' valet and factotum, and majordomo in the baronet's town residence, Grosvenor Square, was by no means devoid of courage; but the contents of the note he was reading in the hall one fine morning early in May were sufficient to put to flight for the moment any vengeful schemes he was harbouring against the wily gentleman who has just quitted the house, and that gentleman no less a person than our old friend Le Gautier.

Timothy Varley was an Irishman, and had been in his youth what is termed a patriot. In his hot blood he had even joined a League for the 'removal of tyrants;' but the League, in spite of its solemn form and binding oaths, had died a natural death. At times, however, the recollection of it troubled Mr Varley's conscience sorely. It was destined to be brought to his mind now in a startling manner.

'G. S. I. You will be at the corner of Chapel Place to-night at nine. A girl will meet you, and show you the way. You are wanted; your turn has come. Do not fail.—NUMBER XL.'

Never did Bob Acres, in that celebrated comedy, *The Rivals*, feel the courage oozing from his finger-tips as did Timothy Varley now. He turned the missive over in his fingers; but no consolation was to be derived from that; and bitterly did he revile the juvenile folly that had placed him in such a position at this time of life.

'It is no sham,' he muttered to himself. 'God save Ireland—that is the old countersign; and to think of it turning up now! I had forgotten the thing years ago. This comes of joining secret societies—a nice thing to bring a respectable family man to! Now, by the powers! who was Number Eleven? That used to be Pat Mahoney; and a mighty masterful man he was, always ready with his hands if anything crossed him. O dear, O dear! this is a pretty thing. Maybe they want to mix me up with dynamite; but if they do, I won't do it, and that's flat. I suppose I shall have to go.'

Giving vent to these words in a doleful tone of voice, he betook himself to his private sanctum. His spirits were remarked to be the reverse of cheerful, and he declined a glass of sherry at lunch, a thing which roused much speculation below stairs.

Punctual to the moment, Timothy Varley stood in Chapel Place waiting for his unknown guide. Just as he was beginning to imagine the affair to be a hoax, and congratulating himself thereon, a woman passed him, stopped, and walked in his direction again. 'God save Ireland!' she said as she repassed.

'Amen, not forgetting one Timothy Varley,' he returned piously.

'It is well,' the woman replied calmly, 'that you are here. Follow me!'

'With the greatest of pleasure.—But hark here; my legs are not so young as yours: if we are going far, let us have a cab, and I'll stand the damage.'

'There is no occasion,' the stranger said in a singularly sweet voice. 'We have not a great distance to travel.'

'Not good enough to ride in the same carriage with a gentleman's gentleman,' Varley muttered, for he did not fail to note the stranger's refined tones.

His guide led him along Tottenham Court Road, and thence to Fitzroy Square. Turning into a little side-street, she reached at length a door, at which she knocked.

In a room on the first floor, Isodore and Valerie le Gautier were seated, waiting the advent of Lucrece and the stranger. Varley began to feel bewildered in the presence of so much beauty and grace; for Isodore's loveliness overpowered him, as it did all men with whom she came in contact. Scarcely deigning to notice his presence, she motioned him to a chair, where he sat the picture of discomfiture, all traces of the audacious Irishman having disappeared.

'Your name is Timothy Varley?' Isodore said.

'Yes, miss; leastways, it was when I came here, though, if you were to tell me I was the man in the moon, I couldn't say nay to you.'

'I know you,' Isodore continued. 'You were born near Mallow, joined the United Brotherhood thirty years ago, and your Number was Twenty-six. If I am wrong, you will please correct me.'

'For goodness' sake, miss—my lady, I mean—don't speak so loud. Think what might happen to me if any one knew!'

'No wonder your countrymen fail, with such chicken-hearts among them,' Isodore observed scornfully. 'I do not want to do you any harm; quite the contrary. There is an advertisement in to-day's *Times*. Your mistress is in search of a maid. Is that so?'

Timothy Varley began to breathe a little more freely. 'Yes,' he answered glibly; 'she does want a maid. She must be honest, sober, and industrious; ready to sit up all night if necessary, and have a good temper—not that Miss Enid will try any one's temper much. The last girl was discharged.'

'Now, Mr Varley, I know a girl who must fill that vacancy. I do not wish to threaten you or hold any rod of terror over your head;

but I shall depend upon you to procure it for my protégée.'

The conversation apparently was not going to be so pleasant. Timothy Varley's mind turned feebly in the direction of diamond robberies.

'Well, miss—that is, my lady—if I may make so bold as to ask you a question: why, if the matter is so simple, don't you write to my young mistress and settle the matter that way?'

'Impossible,' Isodore replied, 'for reasons I cannot enter into with you. You must do what I ask, and that speedily.—You have a certain Monsieur le Gautier at your house often?'

This question was so abruptly asked, that Varley could not repress a start. 'We have,' he growled—'a good deal too often, to please me. My master dare not call his body his own since he first began to come to the house with his signs and manifestations.—You see,' he explained, 'servants are bound to hear these things.'

'At keyholes and such places,' Isodore smiled. 'Yes, I understand such things do happen occasionally. So this Le Gautier is a spiritualist, is he; and Sir Geoffrey is his convert?'

'Indeed, you may say that,' Varley burst out in tones of great grievance. 'The baronet sees visions and all sorts of things.'

'Is it possible,' Valerie whispered to her friend, 'that Hector has really succeeded in gaining an influence over this Sir Geoffrey by those miserable tricks he played so successfully at Rome?'

'It is very probable,' Isodore murmured in reply. 'This Sir Geoffrey is very weak in intellect.—Tell me, Mr Varley,' she continued, turning in his direction, 'does the baronet keep much of Monsieur le Gautier's company? Does he visit at his rooms?'

'I believe he does; anyway, he goes out at nights, and always comes back looking as if he had seen a ghost. Whatever his game may be—and sure enough there is some game on—it's killing him by inches, that's what it's doing.'

'And this change you put down to Le Gautier? Perhaps you are right. And now, another question. Is not there another reason, another attraction besides discussing spiritualism with Sir Geoffrey, that takes him to Grosvenor Square?'

Varley so far forgot himself as to wink impressively. 'You might have made a worse guess than that,' he said. 'I am not the only one who can see what his designs are. Miss Enid is the great attraction.'

'And she?'

'Hates him, if looks count for anything.—And so do I,' he continued; 'and so do all of us, for the matter of that. I would give a year's salary to see his back turned for good!'

'Mr Varley,' Isodore said in grave tones, 'I sent for you here to work upon your fears, and to compel you, if necessary, to do my bidding. That, I see, is not necessary, for we have a common bond of sympathy. For reasons I need not state here, we have good reasons for keeping a watch over this Le Gautier; but rest assured of one thing—that he will never wed your mistress. I shall hold you to secrecy.—And now, you must promise to get my protégée this situation.'

'Well, I will do my best,' Varley replied

cheerfully. 'But how it is going to be done, I really can't see.'

'Irishmen are proverbial for their inventive powers, and doubtless you will discover a way.—The new maid is a French girl, remember, the daughter of an old friend. Perhaps you would like to see her?' With a gesture she indicated Lucrece, who came forward, turning to the Irishman with one of her most dazzling smiles. The feeling of bewilderment came on again.

'She!' he cried; 'that beautiful young lady a servant?'

'When she is plainly dressed, as suitable to her lowly station, she will appear different.'

'Ah, you may pull the leaves from the flowers, but the beauty remains to them still,' Varley replied, waxing poetical. 'However, if it must be, it must; so I will do my best.'

Varley's diplomacy proved successful, for, a week later, Lucrece was installed at Grosvenor Square.

MINERAL SUBSIDENCE.

THE alarming subsidence which took place some time ago in Scotland, on the North British Railway near Prestonpans, and which was fortunately unattended with any accident, has doubtless added a fresh source of fear to the nervous railway passenger. That the permanent way of a railway for a distance of about fifty yards should suddenly sink to the extent of two feet is almost incomprehensible at first; and had this subsidence occurred whilst the train was passing, instead of immediately afterwards, the consequences might have been disastrous. It is the case, however, though it may not be generally known, that subsidences—fortunately only gradual, and comparatively inappreciable—are taking place over many of our railway lines, and that 'minerals' are actually being extracted from underneath nearly every line of railway under which there is any mineral to get.

The damage done to the line at Prestonpans was reported to have been caused by coal-workings which were there long before the railway was laid; but if it was caused by them at all, it was on account of their being influenced by the working of a seam of coal below them, which was going on at the time the subsidence occurred. It is the fact, however, that when a Railway Company acquires ground under its parliamentary powers, the minerals underneath the ground do not pass along with it. This may seem a little surprising at first; but it is not so when it is considered that very frequently the proprietor of the surface of the ground and the proprietor of the minerals underneath it are different persons. Of course the proprietor of an estate under no reservations is proprietor as high as he can get and as deep as he cares to go; but he may sell or lease the minerals and retain the surface, or *vice versa*. Thus it is that a Railway Company has only, as it were, a right of passage over the surface; and that its right goes no deeper, except for the construction or up-keep of its lines. By Act of Parliament, however, the proprietor of minerals below any railway line, before proceeding to work them, must give notice to the Railway

Company of his intention to do so, so as to give the Company an opportunity of buying him off, should it feel disposed. If it does not declare its option to purchase the minerals, the workings proceed, and the railway has to take its chance. The mineral owner will, however, be held liable, should any damage occur owing to improper working.

The subsidence of a railway line underneath which the minerals have been worked is as a rule very gradual, and extends over some length of time. Many railway passengers must have noticed the walls of waiting-rooms disfigured by ungainly cracks, the stone lintels displaced, the hearthstones awry, and many other signs, which are caused by the working of minerals underneath. Some station-masters can show you on the stone face of the platform the number of inches the line has sunk. As a matter of fact, were it not for the gangs of surfacemen the Railway Companies employ to watch any irregularities in their lines, in a very short space of time the permanent way would in many places probably represent something like the proposed line of the Undulating Railway, a fantastical scheme of long ago. The railway in Ayrshire which runs over the old workings of the famous Wishaw coal-seam, especially suffers in the way of subsidence; and some parts of the railway in the west of Fife are known to have gradually sunk to an extent of over ten feet.

But railway lines are not the only parts of the surface which are subsiding owing to the working of minerals. The whole surface of the land surrounding the many pits and mines which are continually belching forth their wagon-loads of coal or other mineral, is gradually subsiding as the extraction of the mineral proceeds; and damage amounting to thousands of pounds is annually being done to the surface and the buildings on it owing to mineral workings. As the period and extent of the subsidence and the damage following on it depend greatly on the method employed in working the coal, a word or two here on this subject may not be out of place.

There are two recognised methods of working out coal. The old method is what is known as the 'stoop-and-room' or 'pillar-and-room' system; and the method introduced into Scotland about the beginning of the present century is known as the 'longwall' or 'Shropshire' system of working. The first system explains itself by its name. After the bed of coal is struck, 'rooms' are worked out, leaving 'pillars' or 'stoops' to support the superincumbent strata. The object to be attained in this system, as practised in the olden times, was to have as large a room worked out, and as small a stoop or pillar of the coal itself left, as was consistent with the safety of the mine and the support of the surface, while the mine was open. But this system entailed the entire loss of the pillars so left. To obviate this loss, the method now generally adopted is to drive narrow rooms or passages, seldom exceeding fourteen feet, through the seam, leaving large pillars—about seventy-five per cent. of the mineral—until the extremity of the available coal is reached. When, however, no regard is to be had for the surface, and the coal has been thus worked out as far as can be done, the miner commences

to work backwards, taking out the stoops or pillars as he goes. The whole roof of the mine then comes down; and this is the most dangerous kind of subsidence. It does not only take effect immediately above the place where 'stooping' has been going on, but it also 'draws' round about it.

The 'longwall' or Shropshire method of working is what is known as the system of complete excavation; that is, the miner takes out the whole coal as he proceeds, leaving only perhaps a foot on the roof, should the overlying strata be soft, and props up a passage with wooden supports as he proceeds, to enable him to keep an open way to the face of the coal. The portions worked out are packed on each side of the 'road' with the waste material taken out with the coal. This method of working, though it necessarily implies subsidence, is on the whole the safest for the surface, and is generally the one adopted. In fact, as mineral landlords are paid, in lieu of rent, a royalty or lordship on every ton of coal or other mineral brought to the surface, and as the tenant can more quickly extract the mineral by the wooden props method, he is generally bound in his lease to work in this manner, when practicable.

Should the coal be worked on the stoop-and-room system, and pillars of coal of sufficient size be left in, the surface will not be injured to any appreciable extent, at least not for many years. As is often the case, however, seams of coal are worked out one below the other; and when the lower one gives way, the pillars above may fall like a pack of cards. There is no saying where the subsidence would reach in such a case. If the pillars do not break, the way in which the 'rooms' close up, if the floor is soft, is rather peculiar. The roof does not all fall in, as would be expected; but the enormous weight of the superincumbent strata pressing on the pillars causes the floor between them to rise up or 'creep,' and the room becomes closed. On the other hand, if the stoops of coal are taken out, the roof comes down with a crash, and the effects on the surface may be disastrous; but of course it sometimes pays better to get out all the coal and let the surface go, than to allow the workings to get closed up and the coal in the pillars to be lost for ever.

The subsidence following on a 'longwall' working is gradual, but sure. The surface is not broken to any great extent, but comes down in one sheet, and not irregularly, as in stoop-and-room workings. The strata generally come to rest in about three or four years. A row of houses which have been cracked through and through on the subsidence reaching the surface, have been known to close up again when the strata have settled.

The damage done by pillar-and-room workings is irregular both as regards effect and time. It may commence, stop, and commence again. Houses are literally wrecked by it. So palpable is it, indeed, that actually the sound of the crushing and subsiding of the house can be distinctly heard. The slates are twisted off the roof, the chimneys hang in all directions, the walls are rent asunder, the foundations give way, and the house is rendered uninhabitable. An instance of this is to be found in the

salt-workings of Cheshire, in the neighbourhood of which, houses are constantly being wrecked. Thousands of pounds are paid every year by mine-owners for damages done to surface proprietors, farmers, and others; and there is no more fruitful source of litigation than surface-damage.

Even under public roads, we find the minerals being worked. The public have only a right of passage, the minerals underneath belonging to the adjoining proprietor, and it is not an uncommon circumstance in mining districts for a road to suddenly sink several feet.

In the case of a proprietor of minerals in lands adjoining the sea, his right, as a general rule, extends only to high-water mark. Below that line, underneath the foreshore and the sea itself, the minerals belong to the Crown. The Crown, of course, can lease the minerals, and they are very frequently worked under the sea itself. In such a case, great precautions have to be observed in the workings, to prevent any chance of the sea breaking in, though, when the stratum above is rock, the mineral is sometimes worked out within a very few feet of the bottom of the sea! In some mines, the roar of the ocean above can be distinctly heard.

This, however, is a digression from the subject of subsidence. Subsidence of the surface above our almost inexhaustible beds of coal has been going on, and will go on more or less, until that day in the dim futurity which has been foretold, when our coal-seams will have become exhausted, but when, let us hope, the inventive genius of posterity will have discovered another fuel, or done away with the necessity of fuel altogether.

GEORGE HANNAY'S LOVE AFFAIR.

CHAPTER II.—LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

For a few days Anne Porteous felt rather miserable. She was angry with herself for her imprudence in allowing such a misfortune to have happened; her feminine vanity was not in the least bit tickled at having the refusal of the famous editor, for she was not at all of that class of savage females who gloat over the roll of their rejected suitors as a Red Indian does over his string of scalps. No; she felt really and truly vexed for her old and kind friend, though, with the inconsistency of her sex, she could not but feel just the least bit piqued that, seeing he had cared for her so much as to ask her to be his wife, he had taken her unavoidable refusal so calmly and in such good part. She was glad to find, however, he had not forgotten her altogether; although he was now at Lucerne, she got the *Olympic* and other London magazines addressed to her in his familiar splashy handwriting, just as before. But there were no letters now. Formerly, she used to act as correspondent between him and her father, whose fingers were too stiff from rheumatism to make writing convenient. She missed the gay cheerful letters, with their satirical sketches of the lions of the circles he moved in, and their playful banter of herself even. However, one day the postman

brought a letter which turned her thoughts into an entirely different channel. It ran as follows:

BRUSSELS, 19th Sept. 1883.

MY DARLING NAN—I have just time to write this before starting for London by the tidal train. Old Uncle Joseph is dead. I have just got the telegram announcing the event, which took place this morning. I hope he will have left me a good round sum, so that I can start practice at once, and then a certain young lady I know of will not be long of coming to keep house for me. With a thousand kisses.—Yours ever,

ALFRED ROBERTON.

She mused over this letter for a few minutes; something in it jarred on her feelings. She did not quite like the matter-of-fact way in which the writer announced the death of his uncle, to whom he was entirely indebted for his upbringing and education. Nor was she quite pleased at the assured way he spoke of a 'certain young lady' coming to keep house for him. Why, as yet he had not even seen her father—not to speak of his having got no consent to their union. Nan was a pre-eminently practical young woman; but a kind, loving, faithful heart beat in her bosom, and it resented the tone of the note as being callous and far too self-assured. Of course, it was written under a pressure for time; but still it might have contained some little expression of sorrow for the death of one who had done so much for him, instead of hoping for a good legacy.

Alfred Robertson was her engaged lover. She met him at a dancing party given by a mutual friend in le Quartier l'Anglais, Brussels. He was possessed of a stalwart handsome figure, and an agreeable face and voice. That he was clever, might possibly be inferred from the fact that he had carried off quite a number of college honours. That he thought himself clever, didn't require to be inferred from anything—it was stamped on his face, and showed itself in his every look and gesture. Whether Anne saw this, we know not; if she did, it was insufficient to prevent her falling deeply in love with him. A few moonlight strolls under the linden trees, a few soft pressures of the hand, a few sighs and tender speeches, and practical, sober-minded Anne gave her whole heart to this handsome youth—the first who had ever addressed her in the magic accents of love. And he? Well, he loved truly and sincerely enough in his own sort of way, just as he had loved other young ladies before. He was one of those men who seem to hold a power of fascination over the other sex. He did not mean to be a flirt—but how could he help the girls falling in love with him? He couldn't make a brute of himself, and be rude and insolent to them—could he? His conquests were, however, usually of brief duration; for some reason or other not known, his previous love affairs had come to an untimely end. It was generally thought by his friends—and himself too—that his love for Anne was sincere and genuine, and could end in nothing else than matrimony. His uncle's demise would bring matters to a crisis. He had adopted him at an early age, being himself a childless widower. Mr Joseph Robertson was a Scotchman, and had

gone early in life to push his fortune in the great Metropolis. Starting business after a while as a cheesemonger, he had in the course of years managed to scrape together quite a little fortune; and when his brother died, he gladly adopted his only son Alfred, and gave him a first-class education. When he arrived at an age for choosing a business or profession, he expressed a desire to be a doctor, so his uncle sent him to Edinburgh University, where, in due course of time, he received his diploma of M.D. While he was engaged pursuing his medical studies, his uncle took it into his head to marry his housekeeper, Mrs Janet Grant. Alfred did not like this change in the old gentleman's domestic arrangements, for, truth to say, there was little love lost between him and the late housekeeper; but any unpleasant feeling he might have felt in the matter was changed into unmitigated disgust by the advent of a baby-cousin—his uncle's son and heir. The old gentleman was of course delighted at this addition to his family; but it did not make any difference in his treatment of his nephew. He still gave him an allowance of three hundred pounds a year; and as he had now got his professional degree, it was arranged that he should travel on the continent for a year, visiting the various centres of medical science, and making himself acquainted with the latest discoveries, before beginning practice in London. It was while on this tour that he met Anne Porteous.

About a week after receiving her lover's letter, a tall, gentlemanly looking stranger entered the coffee-room of Lochenbreck Inn, and, much to the waiting-maid's surprise, asked to see Miss Porteous. Anne did not need to look at the stranger's card; she knew instinctively it was her lover, and there being no one else in the room, she went to meet him. The first fond greetings over, she saw there was something on his mind, and that not of a pleasant nature. She was not long kept in suspense.

'Do you know, Nan, I have been swindled—thoroughly swindled? After my uncle's funeral, I waited to hear the will read, of course. The family lawyer was there; and he said there was no will. His client, he said, had been talking some time ago of making one, and had even given him some general directions about it; but he says it was never executed, and that the scheming old housekeeper and her brat are heirs to all. Isn't it shameful?'

'Well, Alfred dear,' Anne replied in a consolatory tone, 'you know they were nearer to him than you could ever be, and you mustn't grudge them taking what is justly their own. Besides, remember how kind your uncle was to you in his lifetime. Look at what a lot of money he spent on your education and in fitting you for a profession.—But did your aunt give you nothing—not even a remembrance of your uncle?'

'Well, yes,' he grumblingly rejoined; 'she gave me a cheque for a hundred guineas, and had the impudence to tell me she never wanted to see my face again.'

'And you took it?'

'Why, yes. Why shouldn't I?'

'Well, Alfred, if I had been in your place, I would not have accepted of a gift given in such a spirit. However, it will be useful when you begin

practice, which I suppose you will be doing at once now.'

'Start business as a doctor in London, with only a hundred pounds to fall back on! Why, Nan, you're surely joking. But I forget: girls don't understand these matters.'

'Then, what do you purpose doing?' she asked anxiously.

'Oh, my mind is quite made up as to that,' he said, drawing himself up proudly. 'I intend devoting myself to literature.'

'And throw away all your medical study and training for nothing,' she exclaimed. 'Surely, that would be folly, Alfred.'

'There's no folly about it,' he answered. 'Lots of fellows, without half the education or, I may say, ability that I possess, make a thousand or two a year by writing science articles, stories, and what not for the monthlies. I'm told it's about the best paying thing that's going. And then, you see, it does not require any capital. You just jot down your thoughts on a quire of paper, forward it to an editor, and you get a cheque back by return of post for twenty or thirty guineas—or far more, if your name is well known—as mine will soon be,' he added confidently.

This piece of news was not very pleasant to poor Nan. To be a doctor's wife in a year or two was an agreeable enough prospect, especially when she so fondly loved the man. But to enter on matrimony with no more assured means of living than the honorariums which fall to the lot of an ordinary literary hack, was a bleak outlook. How often had she heard Mr Hannay aver that not one in a hundred who tried literature as a profession succeeded in earning a decent living. True, Alfred must be very clever, from the number and value of his college prizes; but then, hadn't her old friend often said that education had but little to do with literary success, and that he had rejected more manuscripts from college-bred would-be contributors than from any other class. She did not fear a life of haphazard poverty for herself; but her woman's instinct told her that it would press hardly on Alfred. She was not blind to the imperfections of his nature; she was far too clear-headed for that. But she regarded him from two distinctly different points of view: from the one, her common-sense showed him in all his human imperfections and failings; from the other, or ideal one, he appeared as a being so far exalted above the common herd of men that to love and serve him all the days of her life would be her chiefest joy and happiness. As the stereoscope projects two different images into one more seemingly real than either taken singly, so did her woman's love commingle these diverse impressions of her lover into a glorified and lovable whole. Who on this earth could be to her what he was to her? Not being of an exacting or jealous nature, she had never asked herself the question—Did he love her as she loved him? If she had done so, she would have smiled in scorn at the very suggestion of such a mean doubt; for did not she remember his warm, trembling words of love—his soft sighs and tender caresses—his declarations of hopeless despair, if she withheld her heart from him? It certainly was a pity this abandonment of his profession; but then, it might only be a temporary one. He perhaps might find that, clever as he was, the paths leading to literary success were

steeper and less flowery than he imagined. If so, then, of course, he would start practice, and all would yet be well. The slight shadow on her countenance cleared off. She said: 'Well, Alfred, you should know best—perhaps you are right. Come and I'll take you to our private parlour. Papa is sitting out in the garden. I must bring him in and introduce him to you.—He must know all now,' she added with a slight tremor. She had put off the evil day as long as she could; but further concealment was now impossible.

It was with faltering accents she confessed her secret to the old gentleman, as she sat down beside him in the garden arbour. If she had informed him that Lochenbreck had suddenly run dry, he could not have been more astonished. Then he got angry, and made use of some very uncomplimentary expressions regarding Anne and her sex in general. But he was a man of sense and feeling at heart; and when he saw the hot tears coursing down her cheeks, he checked himself at once, caressed her, and told her not to make a fool of herself. He knew Anne's character too well to think that he, or any one, could prevent her permanently from doing anything her heart was set on, and which her sound moral consciousness told her was right and justifiable. He, it is true, had cherished secret hopes that his old friend Hannay might have taken a fancy for the girl, and he would have parted with her to him freely; now he was asked to give her to a man that he had never yet seen. It was monstrous; but then girls always do act in a ridiculous and contrary manner in these matters of love.

'Well, Nan, I'll see the lad—there can be no harm in that; and I'll not thwart your happiness if I find him deserving of you.'

Ay, there was the rub. Was he, or almost any one else in the world, deserving of his Nan?

Seated in the cosy parlour, and the embarrassment of the unexpected introduction over, Nan prudently withdrew, leaving the two gentlemen to feel their way into each other's acquaintance over a bottle of claret and a box of cigars. Alfred was a good talker; easy, self-possessed, and even genial in his style.

He felt no diffidence in proposing for Anne; true, meantime he was almost impecunious, and had no established or certain means of living; but he was a gentleman, well educated and bred, and, as he inwardly thought, a very eligible son-in-law for any innkeeper in the land. Anne was now called in, and blushing joined in the conversation. The suitor pressed for an immediate union. This was, however, decisively negatived by both father and daughter. Porteous had been favourably impressed by his proposed son-in-law; but when he learned that his future income was to be derivable solely from literary emoluments, it became him to act in the matter with great caution, for the sake of his daughter's future. If this literary venture was to be gone into, its success must be thoroughly demonstrated in actual pounds, shillings, and pence, before the marriage could take place. Anne thought this a reasonable stipulation: her lover didn't. His pride felt hurt at finding obstacles where he imagined he had an easy walk over. He had, however, to pocket his pride and submit to the inevitable. On these conditions the lovers became engaged, with the old gentleman's approval. A

great weight of concealment was now off Anne's mind. Her spirits rose, and for a few brief days the happy pair abandoned themselves to the innocent delusions and delights of 'Love's young dream.'

Anne was the first to awake to the realities of life. She was nothing if not practical, and she soon realised that all this sweet billing and cooing was but a waste of time. Her knight must go forth into the tournament of life, gain his trophies, and then come back to claim her as his guerdon.

'Now, Alfred,' she said one day, 'I think it is high time you should put your literary projects into execution. That, you can't well do here. I think you should take a cheap lodging in Edinburgh, or some place where you would have the advantage of good reference libraries, and set to work at once.'

'True, Nan; I must think of making a start one of these days.—But you don't wish me away, dearest, do you?' he said in a tender way.

'Oh, you know well enough I don't!' she returned with the slightest trace of impatience in her tone. 'But if we are to get married, it will not be by your idling your time away here. You'll find a hundred pounds won't keep you long in a large city; and think in what an awkward position you would be, if it got done before you found a regular and profitable market for your literary work.'

He was forced to admit the soundness of the advice, which was emphatically indorsed by Mr Porteous. So, the following day he packed up his traps; and the evening found him established in a modest lodging in Nicolson Street, Edinburgh, which had formerly known him as a student.

The lovers might have served as a model for all others so situated, in the regularity and length of their communications to each other. For fully a month, Alfred wrote in the brightest of spirits. He was engaged on a lengthy paper, 'A Comparative Analysis of the Literature of Greece and Rome.' This was intended for a famous London quarterly; he would act prudently, however, and would not commit himself until he had ascertained the very highest sum obtainable for it.

This first venture was completed and posted. In a few days the manuscript was returned with a polite note from the editor. The paper, he admitted, was well written, although not containing any particularly new views on the subject; and at any rate there was no demand for classic literature on the part of the reading public at present: therefore, he was under the necessity of declining it with thanks, &c. He sent it to some other magazines; but the result in substance was the same. He was surprised and disappointed, of course; but buoyed up by his own self-esteem and Anne's kind sympathetic letters, he determined to make a new venture on different lines. He had been very successful in taking prizes in the science classes at college. The science of optics was a strong point with him, so he set to to compose 'A Dissertation on the Polarisation of Light.' This he sent when completed to a celebrated science monthly. The manuscript was returned, and the note accompanying it was discouraging. The editor thought

the article fairly well written, and the facts and theories were correctly given so far as it went, but it was rather behind the times. Repulsed in the higher branches of his chosen profession, he now condescended to write ordinary magazine sketches and stories; but still the long-looked-for success failed to come. He wrote scores of papers—tales, social sketches, &c.; but not one of them found their way into print. In most cases they were returned with a printed form of letter, expressive of the editor's regret at being unable to use the manuscript. In some cases, however, they were good enough to append a line or two of criticism. One said his style was a little stilted, and that he used too many long-syllabled words. Another said, in effect, that he lacked dramatic instinct in the grouping of his incidents and characters, and that the plot was bald and destitute of any probable *motif*. Many never returned his manuscripts at all, or paid the least attention to his oft repeated inquiries regarding them. Disheartened by these repeated failures, it was with delight he read in one of the daily papers an advertisement addressed 'To Authors.' The advertiser, who seemed to be of a philanthropic disposition, professed deep sympathy with the difficulties that beset the path of young aspirants to literary fame. Many a splendid intellect, the advertisement went on to say, had been doomed to languish in obscurity through the want of enterprise of selfish publishers. It was his (the advertiser's) wish to assist struggling merit—in other words, to enable young authors to publish their works on exceptionally favourable terms. Letters inclosing a stamped envelope for reply, and addressed to 'Author,' G. P. O., London, would receive instant attention.

'The very thing to meet my case,' said Alfred to himself. 'I'll write a novel, and then these beggarly editors will see how the public will appreciate my writings.' In high spirits he wrote a letter asking further particulars from the literary philanthropist; and in due course received a courteous reply, stating that if he forwarded the manuscript of the proposed work when finished, it would be examined carefully, and, if judged worthy, would be published on the 'half-profit' system—that is, the resulting profits to be equally divided between the author and the advertiser. It was necessary that a registration fee of ten guineas should be paid in the first instance; this, however, was only as a guarantee of bona fides, and it would be returned when the book was published. The requisite fee was at once forwarded; and Alfred set to work in great spirits to compose a short high-class novel; he purposed giving the story a literary *personnel*, to afford him an opportunity of holding up to his readers' derisive scorn the ridiculous pretensions of ignorant London editors. He wrote to Anne, and depicted in glowing terms the brilliant prospects before him in the near future; and putting his whole soul in his work, and working twelve hours a day, he finished his story (which was somewhat after the style of the *Caxtons*) in less than two months. In sending it to London, he earnestly requested that it should be put in type and published with the least possible delay. The manuscript was duly acknowledged, and compliance with his request promised. It had been handed to the

reader, who would at once set to work on it; and his fee was ten guineas, payable in advance. Poor Alfred's store of sovereigns was now pretty well reduced, and it was with reluctance that he sent this second remittance. In a week his manuscript was returned with a polite note, saying that while the story showed germs of genius, it was not of sufficient general literary merit to warrant publication. Inquiries made through a London friend revealed the fact that he had been the victim of a used-up penny-liner, a man without means, influence, or respectability, who made a discreditable living by playing on the credulity and vanity of amateur authors. Dark despair would have taken hold of most people in his circumstances; his money was now reduced to a trifle; his health affected by his prolonged and severe efforts; but his self-esteem was in no way abated. He still believed literature to be his forte, and determined to give it one more chance. First of all, though, he required rest; and having an invitation from Nan, he took the train one day for Lochenbreck, where he arrived with a portmanteau full of rejected manuscripts, and ten pounds in his pocket.

BLEEDING HEART YARD.

WITH the demolition of Bleeding Heart Yard, many a pilgrim to London will have one goal the less. But it has been too graphically pictured in *Little Dorrit* ever to be forgotten. Of all Dickens' many sketches of the London slums, this is one of the best, although it requires great imaginative powers now to recognise here any 'relish of ancient greatness.' The 'mighty stacks of chimneys,' now much the worse for wear, are still here, and still 'give the Yard a character.' But the poor people who had 'a family sentimental feeling' about the Yard have nearly all flitted, like rats from a sinking ship. Indeed, piles of massive warehouses, which have sprung up on all sides, have already almost swamped their habitations; and any one seeing them in the gray gloaming of a wet winter afternoon, will have some difficulty in devising pleas for their preservation. The Yard is altogether dreary and unlovely, now that it is deserted, save for a couple of workshops, which, possibly, have replaced the factory of Daniel Doyce. A few carriers' carts and costers' barrows, too, seem to have been left here by accident. But for the most part the picture is one of dilapidated desolation. The three-storied brown-brick houses with their low-pitched red-tiled roofs, that run down the southern side, seem to have been the scene of an explosion or a conflagration; or, possibly, they may have been besieged by an army of urchins. Anyhow, not a pane of glass remains in the windows, which were probably cut through the wall at odd times, when wanted; and but for a tattered fringe which still decorates the frames, they might never have been glazed. Some of the cart-sheds and stables which form the ground-floor—to use an appellation that properly belongs

to suburban villas—have been converted into shops, but bear no signs of ever having done a thriving trade; and it is easy to believe that the Yard, 'though as willing a yard as any in Britain,' was never 'the better for any demand for labour.'

But whatever its past, before very long it will have been improved away, and visitors will probably soon have some difficulty in finding out even its site. The witchery of Dickens is shown in nothing so much as the atmosphere of vivid actuality with which he surrounded nearly all his characters, and the localities in which they lived and moved. For years, crowds have paid visits of devotion to the shrines which he has surrounded with such a halo of romance; and he possessed in a remarkable degree the faculty of appropriating all the charm with which legend and tradition had surrounded spots, and endowing them with a new glamour, until he made himself the true *genius loci*. His knowledge of London was certainly 'extensive and peculiar.' It would be easy to name a dozen nooks within a stone's throw of Holborn alone which he made his own. The narrow and crowded streets which, when Dickens wrote, were even more squalid than they are now, had for him an irresistible attraction. From his chambers in Furnival's Inn as a centre, he was a veritable explorer in all directions; and he has painted for us with his pen a series of sketches of these courts and alleys the realism of which the pencil of even George Cruikshank could not rival.

The nomenclature of London presents an endless succession of problems which never seem to get much nearer solution; and so far as many disputed sites are concerned, there is every likelihood that they will soon be removed from the field of controversy by being obliterated and altogether forgotten. It is notoriously a perpetual cause of surprise to foreigners, and especially our American cousins, that we are so heedless of being a nation with a history as to take no pains to preserve our historical landmarks. There are a thousand-and-one buried sites in the streets of London alone, which have played their parts in our national and municipal development, and there is none that cares to put up a stone to preserve their traditions from oblivion. But for Bleeding Heart Yard no very heroic etymology can be claimed. Dickens, it is to be feared, drew largely on his imagination, which he doubtless found served him in better stead than any number of old folios, for his amusing derivations. Except in *Little Dorrit*, there seems to be but scanty authority for the tradition that this was the scene of a murder. It is, however, beyond dispute that Ely Place and the adjacent streets were occupied by the luxurious town palace of the Bishops of Ely. Within the walls were included twenty acres of ground. This was, about the year 1577, sold to Christopher Hatton by the Bishop of Ely, who was, however, only made to carry out the contract by Elizabeth's memorable threat that otherwise she would unfrock him. It was here that the famous chancellor died in

1591. But his house and garden do not seem to have been demolished until the middle of the seventeenth century, for Evelyn, writing in 1659, tells us how he went to see 'the foundations now laying for a long street and buildings in Hatton Garden, designed for a little town, lately an ample garden.' Of a certain Lady Hatton, probably the wife of Sir Christopher's great-nephew, it is gravely recorded that she had a compact with the Evil One, and that on the night when this came to an end, that personage, in the guise of a cavalier, attended certain festivities which were being held at Hatton House, and having lured her into the garden, tore her in pieces—her 'bleeding heart' being afterwards found. But if this weird legend had even so solid a foundation as a murder, it is probable that some record of it would have survived.

Little Dorrit is also the authority for the story of the young lady who was closely imprisoned in her chamber here by her cruel father for refusing to marry the suitor he had chosen for her. The legend related how the young lady used to be seen up at her window behind the bars, murmuring a love-lorn song, of which the burden was, 'Bleeding heart, bleeding heart, bleeding away,' until she died. It will be remembered that although the Yard was divided in opinion, this story carried the day by a great majority, notwithstanding that it was supposed to have originated with 'a tambour-worker, a spinster, and romantic,' living in the Yard.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the point has received the attention of the seekers after miscellaneous knowledge, and a number of alternative derivations have been suggested. One learned antiquary, for instance, reminds us that 'bleeding heart' is the name of the red wallflower in certain parts of England, but omits to point out the connection. The most plausible is the suggestion that the court may have taken its name from a hostel known as the *Bleeding Hart*, and it is well known that sign-painters frequently prove shaky in their orthography. Thus, he records that in Warwickshire, an inn known as the *White Hart* was some years since adorned with a signboard representing a human heart, or at least an ace of hearts. Then some people still cling to the belief that the sign of the Bleeding Heart dates from pre-Reformation times, and is emblematical of the five sorrowful mysteries of the rosary. We must leave it to others to reconcile these conflicting theories. But for its associations with the fortunes of *Little Dorrit*, the bare existence of the court would certainly have remained in oblivion, and its demolition would have excited no unusual regret.

But there are those for whom the Yard has been associated with the history of a set of very real personages. Hither many folk have gone in search of 'the domicile of Plornish, plasterer,' and have sought to identify 'the parlour' in which the Plornish family lived, and which was pointed out to callers by 'the painted hand, on the forefinger of which the artist had depicted a ring, and a most elaborate nail of the genteelst form.' Here, too, they have probably pictured for themselves the Patriarch 'floating serenely through the Yard in the forenoon' with the

express purpose of getting up trustfulness in his shining bumps and silken locks, to be succeeded a few hours later by Pancks, that prince of rent-collectors, who, 'perspiring, and puffing and darting about in eccentric directions, and becoming hotter and dingier every moment, lashed the tide of the Yard into the most agitated and turbid state.' They may further have looked for the small grocery and general dealer's shop 'at the crack end of the Yard,' where Mrs Plornish was established by Mr Dorrit; and for 'Happy Cottage,' that most wonderful of interiors. And they may have wondered whereabouts was the spot where Pancks tackled the Patriarch, snipped off short the sacred locks, and cut down the broad-brimmed hat to a stewpan, thereby converting the venerable Casby, 'that first-rate humbug of a thousand guns,' into 'a bare-poll'd, goggle-eyed phantom.'

FLEET STREET MARRIAGES.

It is said that the Fleet Street marriages of London originated with the incumbents of Trinity, Minorities, and St James's, Duke Place. The incumbents claimed to be exempt from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, and performed the marriages without banns or license. It is not exactly known in what year these gentlemen started their lucrative profession; but one named Elliot, who was rector of St James's, was suspended by the Bishop of London in 1616 for performing these ceremonies. The trade was then taken up by clerical prisoners living within the Rules of the Fleet; and Mr Burn tells us that, as a rule, these were just the men—having neither money, character, nor liberty to lose—to adopt the profession; and he further says that they were in the main 'lusty jolly fellows, but thorough rogues and vagabonds, guilty of various offences.' That they were not ashamed of the business is evident from the fact that they advertised in the *Daily Advertiser* of that year to the following effect: 'G. R.—At the true chapel, at the old *Red Hand and Mitre*, three doors up Fleet Lane, and next door to the *White Swan*, marriages are performed by authority by the Rev. Mr Symson, educated at the university of Cambridge, and late chaplain to the Earl of Rothes.—N.B. Without imposition.'

'J. Lilley, at the *Hand and Pen*, next door to the China Shop, Fleet Bridge, London, will be performed the solemnisation of marriages by a gentleman regularly bred at one of our universities, and lawfully ordained according to the institutions of the Church of England, and is ready to wait on any person in town or country.'

There must have been great competition in the business, for we are told that there might be seen in corners of windows tickets stating 'Weddings performed cheap here,' 'The Old and True Register,' &c. But the great trade was at the 'marriage houses' whose landlords were also publicans, the *Bishop Blaire*, the *Horseshoe and Magpie*, the *Fighting Cocks*, the *Savoyers*, the *Hand and Pen*, the *Bull and Garter*, and the *King's Head*, the last two being kept by warders of the Fleet prison.

The parson and landlord—the latter usually acting as clerk—divided the fees between them,

after paying a shilling to the tout who brought in the customers.

The *Grub Street Journal* of January 1735 has the following: 'There are a set of drunken, swearing parsons, with their myrmidons, who wear black coats, and pretend to be clerks and registers of the Fleet, and who ply about Ludgate Hill, pulling and forcing people to some peddling alehouse or brandy-shop to be married; even on a Sunday, stopping them as they are going to church and almost tearing their clothes off their backs.'

This is confirmed by Pennant, who says: 'In walking along the streets in my youth, on the side next the prison, I have often been tempted by the question, "Sir, will you be pleased to walk in and be married?" The parson was seen walking before his shop, a squalid, profligate figure, clad in a tattered plaid nightgown, with a fiery face, and ready to couple you for a dram of gin or a roll of tobacco.'

Ladies who were possessed, or supposed to possess means, were often kidnapped and forced to marry ruffians whom they had never seen. For instance, we read that a young lady of birth and fortune was forced from her friends, 'and by the assistance of a wry-necked swearing parson, married to an atheistical wretch, whose life was a continual practice of all manner of vice.'

Again, we learn that a young lady appointed to meet a gentlewoman at the Old Playhouse, Drury Lane; but something prevented the gentlewoman coming, and the young lady being alone when the play was over, told a boy to fetch a coach for the city. 'One like a gentleman helps her into it and jumps in after her. "Madam," says he, "this coach was called for me; and since the weather is bad and there is no other, I beg leave to bear you company. I am going into the city, and will set you down wherever you please."

The girl begged to be excused; but the man told the coachman to drive on. The result was that she was driven to a house, where she was induced to go in on the pretext of seeing the man's sister, who would accompany her the rest of the journey. The sister came, but immediately vanished, and in her place appeared a 'tawny fellow in a black coat and black wig,' who said: 'Madam, you are come in good time; the doctor was just agoing!'

'The doctor!' exclaimed the girl; 'what has the doctor to do with me?'

'To marry you to that gentleman. The doctor has waited for you these three hours, and will be paid by you or that gentleman before you go!'

'That gentleman,' replied the girl, recovering herself, 'is worthy a better fortune than mine,' and begged to be allowed to go; but the men were obdurate; and when she found she could not escape without money or pledge, told them that she liked the gentleman so much, that she would meet him the next night and be married; but they did not allow her to go before she had given them some pledge, and she therefore gave them a ring, which, to quote her words, 'was my mother's gift on her death-bed, enjoining that, if ever I married, it should be my wedding ring;' and by this means she escaped.

The indecency of these practices, and the facility they afforded for accomplishing forced and fraudulent marriages, were not the only evils, for we are told that marriages, when entered in the register, could be antedated without limit, on payment of a fee, or not entered at all; and women frequently hired temporary husbands at the Fleet, in order that they might be able to plead marriage to an action for debt. These hired husbands were provided by the parsons at five shillings each; and we are told that one man was married four times under different names, and received five shillings on each occasion 'for his trouble.'

That the parsons did not always get the best of it may be supposed from the following extract from the register of the Fleet Marriages: '1740. Geo. Grant and Ann Gordon, bachelor and spinster: stole my clothes-brush.'—'Married at a barber's shop next Wilson's—namely, one Kerrils, for half a guinea; after which it was extorted out of my pocket, and for fear of my life, delivered.'

We are told that all sorts and conditions of men flocked to the Fleet to be married in haste, from the barber to the officer in the Guards—from the pauper to the peer. Timbs, in his book on *London*, states that among the aristocratic patrons of these unlicensed clergy were Lord Abergavenny; the Honourable John Bourke, afterwards Viscount Mayo; Sir Marmaduke Gresham; Lord Banff; Lord Montague, afterwards Duke of Manchester; Viscount Sligo; the Marquis of Annandale; Henry Fox, afterwards Lord Holland; and others. Walpole writes to Sir Horace Mann about Fox's marriage as follows: 'The town has been in a great bustle about a private match, but which, by the ingenuity of the ministry, has been made politics. Mr Fox fell in love with Lady Caroline Lennox (eldest daughter of the Duke of Richmond), asked her, was refused, and stole her. His father was a footman; her great-grandfather, a king. All the blood-royal have been up in arms.'

The Bishop of London attempted to put a stop to these marriages in 1702, but with very little effect; and it was not until 1754 that an Act of Parliament was passed to prevent them. It is stated that the day before the Act was to come into force (March 24), there were no fewer than two hundred and seventeen marriages recorded in one register book; and these were the last of the Fleet weddings.

A collection of the registers of Fleet Marriages was made in 1821, and was purchased by the government; they weighed over a ton.

After the Marriage Bill of 1754, the Savoy Chapel came into vogue. The following advertisement appeared in the *Public Advertiser* of January 2, 1754: 'By authority—Marriages performed with the utmost privacy, decency, and regularity at the ancient royal chapel of St John the Baptist, in the Savoy, where regular and authentic registers have been kept from the time of the Reformation (being two hundred years and upwards) to this day. The expenses not more than one guinea—the five-shilling stamp included. There are five private ways by land to this chapel, and two by water.'

The proprietor of this chapel was the Rev.

John Wilkinson, who fancied—as the Savoy was extra-parochial—that he was privileged to issue licenses upon his own authority, and so took no notice of the Act. During the following year, 1755, he married no fewer than eleven hundred and ninety couples. The authorities at last took the matter up, and Wilkinson went into hiding; but he got a curate named Grierson to perform the ceremonies, he still giving the licenses, by which he thought his assistant would be harmless; but this was not so. Two members of the Drury Lane company were united by Grierson; and Garrick hearing of this, obtained the certificate, and had Grierson arrested. He was tried, convicted, and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation; by which sentence, we are told, fourteen hundred marriages were declared void. We are not told what became of Wilkinson, whose trade was thus put a stop to.

TO A LADY.

AGAIN I welcome the familiar pen;
Again I sit me down to think and write;
Fairly and free should flow my fancies when
So fair a subject calls me to indite.
And thou, O Muse, whose gracious fingers oft,
And ne'er, I trust, in vain, have beckoned me,
Grant that thy spirit, breathing numbers soft,
May now descend to aid thy humblest votary.

So, when the lark, in fullest tide of song,
Makes sudden pause amidst his music clear,
As seeking which, of all the thoughts that throng,
First to embody for the listening ear,
So do I hesitate and pause, in doubt
With such diversity where to begin,
For onward eyes would praise those charms without,
Whilst Love would greet the soul enshrined those
charms within.

Ah, gracious lady, words alone are vain
Thy finer, subtler traits to fitly show;
Rather Apollo's art, in sweetest strain,
With long-drawn symphonies, as soft as low,
And cunningly devised by master-hand,
Thy worth and beauty better would express
Than my rude phrases—serving but to stand
As tokens of thy power and of my faithfulness.

Yet tokens true are they; as tender shoots,
Just peeping through the earth, are sureties good
That deep below are hidden strongest roots,
Which give this evidence of lustiness,
So doth the love, long 'prisoned in my breast,
Forced by its growth, at length expression find;
I place my life, my all, at thy behest;
I could not love thee more, nor oaths could stronger
bind.

Yet what are words? Mere breaths which pass away;
And words are at the service of us all.
Vows, true or false, ring all the same to-day;
We by our after-actions stand or fall.
Give me to do some deed, some work, to show
And prove the love I bear thee; test my faith.
I speak no more; in silence, love shall grow,
And silent witness give that love shall last till
death.

R. G. W.

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